

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 4158

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, PINS, DR

SUBJECT: CALL BY AMBASSADOR ON PRESIDENT BALAGUER JULY 28

REF: STATE 186835

1. AT AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST, PRESIDENT BALAGUER SAW HIM TODAY AT 1:00 P.M. PURPOSES OF VISIT WERE TO OBTAIN BALAGUER'S VIEWS ON SERIES OF BILLS RECENTLY PASSED BY DOMINICAN LEGISLATURE AND ON MILITARY COMMAND CHANGES AND TO MANIFEST U.S. CONCERN AT TRANSITION ACTIVITIES.

2. THE PRESIDENT WAS CALM AND LUCID AS ALWAYS, THOUGH PERHAPS SOMEWHAT FRAILER IN APPEARANCE THAN WE HAVE SEEN HIM BEFORE. AMBASSADOR MADE POINT THAT HE WOULD WISH TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH BALAGUER AFTER LATTER'S PASSING OF THE PRESIDENCY. BALAGUER OF COURSE SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO RECEIVE HIM AT ANY TIME. HIS MANNER WAS BUSINESS-LIKE BUT FRIENDLY.

3. ON THE QUESTION OF THE LEGISLATION, BALAGUER DISMISSED THE CONCERNS OF "SOME PEOPLE" THAT THIS LEGISLATION WAS AIMED AT INHIBITING THE NEW GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT THE BILLS WERE INDIVIDUALLY POSITIVE AND HELPFUL AND HE DID
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NOT SEE WHY THERE WAS THE CONCERN ABOUT THEM THAT HAD BEEN EVINCED.

4. ON THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT LAW, BALAGUER SAID THAT THIS HAD ORIGINATED IN THE CENTRAL BANK -- NOT IN THE PRESIDENCY -- AND THAT IT HAD BEEN LOOKED AT ALL ALONG THE LINE BY INTERESTED PARTIES. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD GIVE

INVESTORS MUCH-NEEDED "RULES OF THE GAME" THAT WOULD BE USEFUL. COMMENT: HE DID NOT EXPLAIN THE PRECIPITATE SPEED WITH WHICH THE LAW WAS BROUGHT UP NOR THE FACT THAT USEFUL SUGGESTIONS FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND GODR OFFICIALS HAD BEEN IGNORED.

5. BALAGUER NEXT SPOKE TO THE LEGISLATION TRANSFERRING THE DNI (STATE SECRET SERVICE) TO THE ARMY. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS A USEFUL MOVE SINCE IN CIVILIAN HANDS IT HAD BEEN A LEAK-RIDDEN AND INEFFICIENT ORGANIZATION WHICH WAS REALLY OF MORE HELP TO THE U.S. SECRET SERVICE THAN TO HIS OWN NEEDS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, IN FACT, THE SUGGESTION FOR THE TRANSFER HAD COME FROM THE U.S. "SECRET SERVICES." WHEN AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED SURPRISE, HE SAID IT DID NOT COME FROM THE EMBASSY BUT FROM OTHER SOURCES. HE DID NOT ELABORATE FURTHER EXCEPT TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT THE EFFICIENCY, USEFULNESS AND SECRECY OF THE SERVICE WOULD BE IMPROVED.

6. FINALLY, BALAGUER ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO THE ORGANIC LAW OF THE ARMED FORCES. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD AND ONE LONG OVERDUE. IT HAD BEEN WELCOMED BY THE ARMED FORCES AND PARTICULARLY BY YOUNGER PEOPLE IN THE SERVICE WHO SAW IT AS A REGULARIZATION OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT AND AN ASSURANCE THAT PROMOTION WOULD NOT BE BLOCKED BY OVERAGE SENIOR OFFICERS REMAINING IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SERVICE. HE SAW NOTHING SINISTER OR INHIBITING IN IT.

7. BALAGUER SAID HE CONSIDERED THE CHANGES IN THE ARMED FORCES COMMANDS HELPFUL IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONGER TERM. NIVAR WANTED OUT OF THE POLICE AND HIS REPLACEMENT, ROBINSON BREA, IS A WIDELY-RESPECTED PROFESSIONAL. THE AIR FORCE NEEDED A LITTLE MORE DISCIPLINE AND ESPRIT WHICH HE THOUGHT LLUBERAS WOULD GIVE IT. PEREZ Y PEREZ WAS A FINE OFFICER, SINCERE AND OBJECT OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT FROM OFFICERS AND MEN. HE THOUGHT HE WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF. BALAGUER HAD NO COMMENT ON NIVAR BEYOND THAT NOTED ABOVE.

8. COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE TO THROW ANY LIGHT HERE ON BALAGUER'S STRANGE COMMENTS ABOUT THE DNI AND U.S. INTEREST IN SEEING IT MOVED TO THE MILITARY. THE EVIDENT REASON FOR TRANSFERRING THE DNI, AS REVEALED TO EMBASSY SOURCES BY DNI OFFICIALS, WAS TO PREVENT DNI RECORDS FROM FALLING INTO HANDS OF LEFTIST ELEMENTS IN THE GUZMAN ADMINISTRATION. OUR ASSUMPTION IS THAT BALAGUER WAS FED THE STORY HE TOLD THE AMBASSADOR BY SOMEONE WITH AN INTEREST IN SEEING THE DNI MOVED.

THIS SAME MISINFORMATION MAY BE PASSED ON TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. SUBJECT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE, EMBASSY WILL SEEK MORE LIGHT ON THIS AND IN ANY EVENT TRY DISCREETLY TO DISABUSE BOTH BALAGUER AND GUZMAN ON THIS QUESTION.

9. THE REST OF BALAGUER'S STATEMENTS ARE ABOUT WHAT WAS TO BE EXPECTED. THE POINT HAS BEEN MADE, HOWEVER, OF CONTINUED U.S. CONCERN ABOUT THE CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF HIS REGIME.
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